



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/955,565	09/12/2001	Thomas Hantschel	IMEC222.001AUS	9391

2099-5 7590 05/21/2003

Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear LLP
2040 Main Street
Fourteenth Floor
Irvine, CA 92614

EXAMINER

LUU, THANH X

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2878

DATE MAILED: 05/21/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/955,565

Applicant(s)

HANTSCHER ET AL.

Examiner

Thanh X Luu

Art Unit

2878

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) 1-3 and 6-16 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 4, 5 and 17-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 September 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6, 7.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: 11-16 of Figures 1a-f; 21, 23, 25-29, 250, 251, 254 or Figures 2a-e. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.
2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: contact area 37 is not found in Figure 3 or 4. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.
3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the means for etching, the means for depositing, the means for patterning, the means for partially under-etching and the means for peeling off of claims 19 and 20 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings

will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

4. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

5. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

Since Applicant has Figures 1a-f, Applicant should state in the brief descriptions that the descriptions are of "Figures 1a-f," and not just "Figure 1." Similarly for each figure that has multiple subparts, Applicant should change the brief description to include each figure subpart (e.g. Figures 2a-c; Figures 3a-e, etc).

On page 8, last line, "through" is misspelled.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

6. Claims 1, 6, 8, 9, 17-20 are objected to because of the following informalities:

Regarding claims 1, 9 and 17-20, Examiner recommends using --mold-- instead of "mould".

Regarding claim 6, it is unclear how the contact area is structurally related to the probe tip.

Regarding claim 8, it is unclear how the cantilever is structurally related to the probe.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

Art Unit: 2878

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

8. Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The claims use means-plus function language. The specification fails to disclose of any structure or device that can comprise of such means. Thus, it would not enable one of ordinary skill in the art how to make and/or use the claimed invention.

9. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

10. Claims 4, 5, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 4, the claim is dependent on itself. For examination purposes, claim 4 is believed to be dependent from claim 1. Further, "the first layer" lacks proper antecedent basis, as it is unclear if the first layer refers to the patterned first layer or the first layer before patterning. Also, "the step of plating" lacks proper antecedent basis.

Regarding claim 5, the claim is dependent on itself. For examination purposes, claim 5 is believed to be dependent from claim 1. Further, "the first layer" lacks proper antecedent basis, as it is unclear if the first layer refers to the patterned first layer or the first layer before patterning. Also, "the additional layer" lacks proper antecedent basis.

Regarding claims 19 and 20, Applicant uses means-plus function language. However, the specification fails to describe of any structure or device associated with the means. Thus, it is unclear what equivalents would read on the means or what scope the means is intended to encompass. Claims 19 and 20 are not examined on their merits since the scope of the claims is unclear.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

12. Claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Takayama et al. (U.S. Patent 5,923,033).

Regarding claims 17 and 18, Takayama et al. disclose (see Figure 25A) a probe comprising: a cantilever beam (at 61) a probe tip (at 63) and a contact area (66 or 67). That is, since the claim is drawn to a product-by-process, the claimed invention can be anticipated by the prior art by simply showing the product.

Allowable Subject Matter

13. Claims 1-3 and 6-16 are allowable over the prior art of record.

14. Claims 4 and 5 would be allowable once the 112 rejections are overcome.

15. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: a method of manufacturing a probe as claimed, more specifically in combination

with: partially under-etching the probe tip and peeling off the probe tip from the underlying masking layer is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.


Conclusion

16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thanh X. Luu whose telephone number is (703) 305-0539. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Porta, can be reached on (703) 308-4852. The fax phone number for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 308-7722.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

txl
May 16, 2003


Thanh X. Luu
Patent Examiner